

Spending Cuts Should Come from Members of Congress' Pay

April 27, 2010

Mr. Speaker, Kansans continue to suffer from the effects of the recession. Times remain tough for many. Small business owners are struggling to keep the doors of their businesses open. Families are struggling to pay their bills. When faced with difficult times, Kansans make sacrifices. They cut back where they can and stretch every dollar to make ends meet.

Times are also tough for the Federal Government. The national debt is more than \$12 trillion and it continues to grow every day.

When times are tough, Kansans expect their government to act like they do--to make sacrifices and cut spending. Yet, the Federal Government is spending more than ever before.

One of the first places Congress should look to cut spending is the annual cost-of-living increase for Members of Congress. Representatives and Senators do not deserve a raise, especially when many Kansans will not receive a raise this year and the unemployment rate

remains high.

I have long been opposed to the hidden process by which Members of Congress get an increase in their pay. The lack of transparency in the yearly raise only serves to increase skepticism, disillusion and distrust of government. Last year, I sponsored H.R. 1597, which eliminates the automatic pay increase for Members of Congress. If Members of Congress believe they have earned a raise, they should vote on it in full view of the public.

I am pleased today, that the House of Representatives is considering a bill in clear view of the public that would do away with the cost-of-living increase for next year. While this legislation, H.R. 5146, is only a one-year fix to the problem, it is an important first step and I am proud to be one of the sponsors of this legislation. I oppose the yearly automatic increase in pay and strongly support today's legislation to make sure Members of Congress do not get a raise next year.

Our employers, the voters, are right to be unhappy with Washington's spending spree. There should be no increase in congressional pay until Congress listens to the public and cuts spending.